

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-10 L-03
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FM USMISSION USNATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4183
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 08855

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: NATO, IR
SUBJECT: POLADS DISCUSSION OF IRAN SITUATION

REF: STATE 236758

1. IN CONTINUING DISCUSSION OF IRAN SITUATION, UK REP
AT SEPTEMBER 26 POLADS MEETING MADE FOLLOWING POINTS
CONCERNING IRANIAN ARMED FORCES:

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- --ARMY AND OTHER BRANCHES OF ARMED FORCES REMAINED
REMARKABLY STABLE UNDER PRESSURE OF AUGUST/SEPTEMBER
DEVELOPMENTS, BUT WHETHER THEY COULD CONTINUE TO DO SO
UNDER FURTHER SUSTAINED TENSION IS MOOT POINT.

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- --ARMED FORCES OWE MUCH TO PAHLAVIS, REPORT DIRECTLY
TO SHAH, AND ARE NOT CONTROLLED BY THE CABINET. THEY
ARE ALSO WELL PAID AND ENJOY MANY PRIVILEGES.

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- --THERE ARE, HOWEVER, CERTAIN WEAKNESSES. CONSCRIPTS
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ARE DRAWN FROM CROSS-SECTION OF POPULATION AND ARE
SUSCEPTIBLE TO SAME RELIGIOUS FEELINGS AS REST OF
POPULATION. IN FACE OF OPPOSITION FROM RELIGIOUS
LEADERS, IT CANNOT BE ASSUMED THAT TROOPS WOULD ALWAYS
OBEY ORDERS TO FIRE UPON CO-RELIGIONISTS.

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- --SENIOR OFFICERS ARE READY TO ACT DECISIVELY, AND

DISCIPLINE IS GOOD. IN GENERAL IT APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT WOULD LIMIT THE ARMED FORCES ABILITY TO MAINTAIN INTERNAL SECURITY IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF A CRISIS. BUT CASUALTIES AND DIMINISHING SUCCESS OVER A LONGER PERIOD MIGHT REDUCE THIS ABILITY.

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--OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER CONCERNING RELIABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ARMED FORCES INCLUDE:

(A) REGIONAL TIES;

(B) POLITICAL DISSIDENCE AMONG OFFICERS, ALTHOUGH THIS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM. COUNTER-SUBVERSION AUTHORITY IS EFFECTIVE DOWN TO SUB-UNIT LEVEL AND SENIOR OFFICERS, IF DISSATISFIED, ARE MORE LIKELY TO TRY TO GET THE SHAH TO CHANGE HIS POLICIES THAN TO OVERTHROW HIM;

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(C) POOR LEADERSHIP AND HARSH DISCIPLINE;

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(D) LOW TECHNICAL STANDARDS, ALTHOUGH THIS IS UNLIKELY TO IMPAIR ARMED FORCES INTERNAL SECURITY CAPABILITIES;
AND

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(E) LACK OF RIOT CONTROL TRAINING, ALTHOUGH OVERWHELMING FORCE SHOULD COUNTERBALANCE THIS IN MOST CIRCUMSTANCES.

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--HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF THESE VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS, THE ARMED FORCES SEEM WELL ABLE TO HANDLE THE SITUATION, AND IT WOULD HAVE TO BECOME MUCH MORE GRAVE THAN NOW APPEARS LIKELY BEFORE THEIR RELIABILITY WOULD BE SHAKEN.

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2. NETHERLANDS REP, DRAWING FROM DUTCH EMBASSY TEHRAN REPORT, GAVE GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF INTERNAL SITUATION PARALLELING INFORMATION PROVIDED BY US (REFTEL). HE NOTED THAT SPECIAL IRANIAN RIOT POLICE ARE BEING TRAINED IN ORDER TO AVOID USE OF TROOPS IN ANY FUTURE DISTURBANCES. BENNETT

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